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# CANADA'S NEW CONSTITUTION

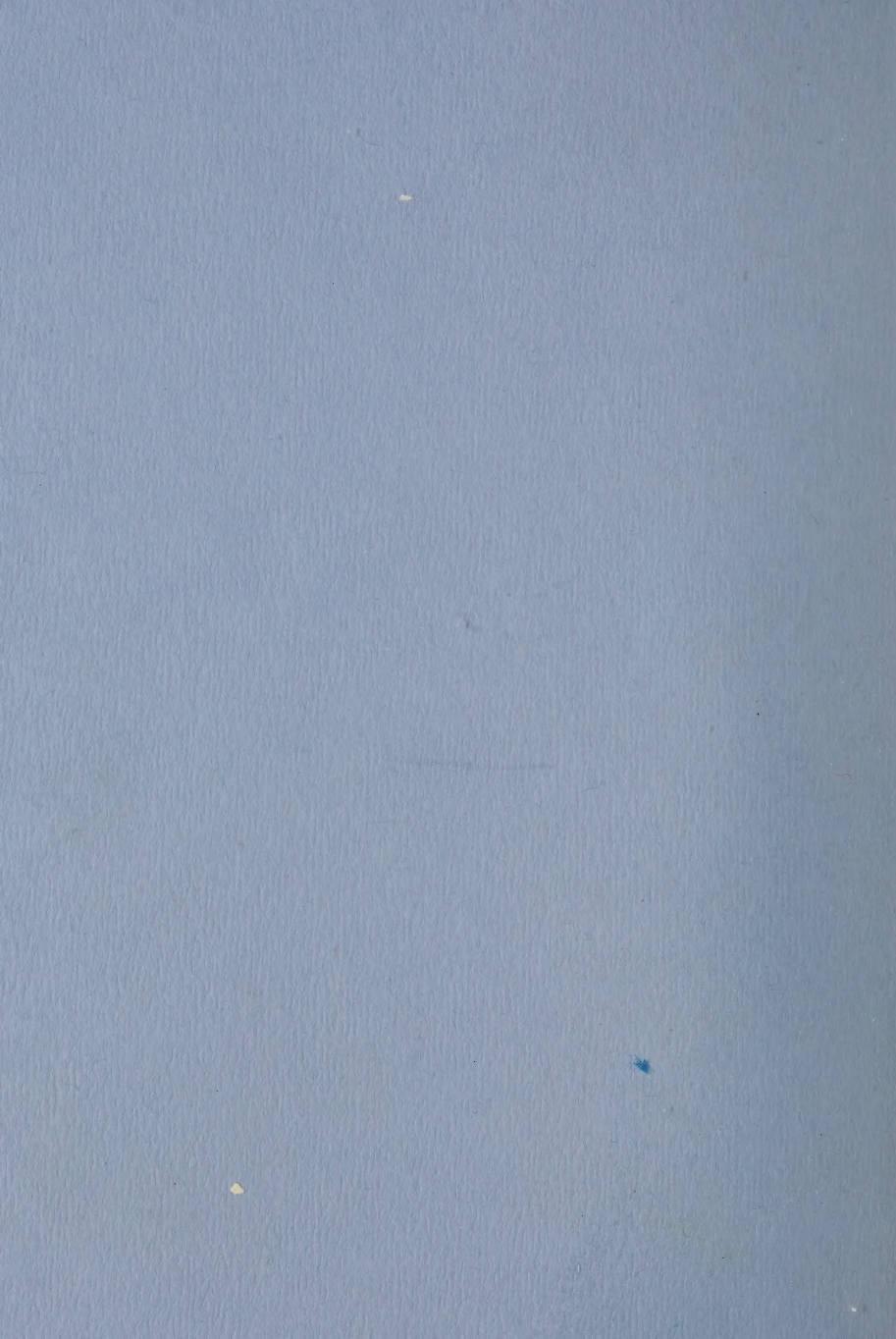
Some personal reminiscences, impressions and feelings



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## On the eve of an historic weekend

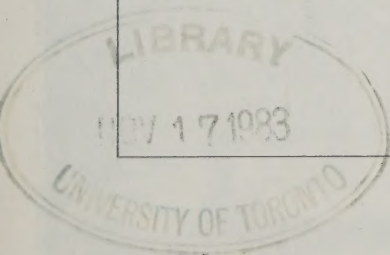
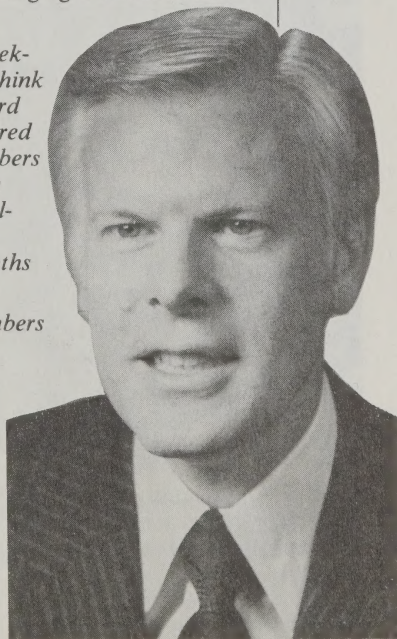
This booklet is an adaptation of remarks by Mr. Wells in the Ontario Legislature during the Throne Speech debate. The date was April 15, 1982 — just two days before Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed the new Canadian Constitution at a special ceremony in Ottawa.

As Ontario's Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Wells played an integral role in the complex and sensitive process of negotiation which had led Canada to this threshold of a new era in our history.

It was fitting, therefore, that Mr. Wells directed his remarks to the specific section of the Throne Speech which had dealt with the new Constitution and the emerging Canada ahead. As he began, he said simply:

*"We are on the eve of an historic weekend in the history of this country. I think it is well to reminisce a bit, and record some of the events which have occurred — some of them known to the Members of this House, some of them perhaps not — and to record some of my feelings and impressions about what we should be doing in the next few months and years."*

*"I would like," he said, "to tell Members a little bit about what happened."*







**A**s Members know, the Canada Bill has passed the British Parliament. It received Royal Assent on March 29, 115 years to the day, and even to the hour, when Queen Victoria gave Royal Assent to the British North America Act.

On April 17, this Saturday, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth will be proclaiming our new Constitution and the Canada Act.

Some recent dates are worth recording as especially significant in the events leading up to this very important occasion:

**November 5, 1981** was the day on which the nine Provinces and the government of Canada signed the Accord which set in motion the final stage of this Constitutional revision.

**November 20, 1981**, the revised Canada Act was introduced into the House of Commons in Ottawa, as agreed to in the Accord.

**December 2, 1981**, Third Reading of the Bill took place in Ottawa, and passed by a vote of 246 to 24 — supported by the Liberal Party, the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party, and the majority of the Members in those parties.

**December 8, 1981**, the Bill was passed by the Senate of Canada by a vote of 59 to 23.

**December 9, 1981**, the Bill was presented to the Queen, in London.

**December 22, 1981**, the Bill was tabled in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom.

**February 17, 1982**, after a debate, it passed Second Reading in London by a vote of 334 to 44.

**March 8, 1982**, the Bill passed Third Reading in the British House by a vote of 177 to 33.

**March 10, 1982**, it was introduced in the British House of Lords for First Reading.

**March 25, 1982**, it passed Third Reading in the House of Lords with no dissent.

**March 29, 1982**, the Bill received Royal Assent in England.

**April 17, 1982**, the Canada Act and our new Constitution will be proclaimed officially by the Queen, in Ottawa.

After 115 years, we are finally bringing home our Constitution.

This Act is the product of a lot of hard work and a concerted effort by many Canadians. I think we have achieved a remarkable document — one which represents a reaffirmation of our nationhood, our belief in the Monarchy, our belief in democratic and human rights, and our belief in our Parliamentary system of government.

In short, this new Constitution repre-

sents our vision of Canada — representing what most Canadians feel and believe should be this country of Canada.

There have been some I have spoken to — and I know some of my friends in this House have perhaps had similar questions put to them — who have asked and wondered whether we will still have a Queen after patriation of the Constitution. The fact is that Her Majesty's position (and that of her representatives in Canada) will remain unaltered — notwithstanding the fact that the Constitution is coming home to this country and that it is a made-in-Canada Constitution.

We will still have a Queen of Canada, and her role will be protected. I am one who believes that it will be enhanced and strengthened in our new Constitution, as it should be. I believe that the Monarchy is an institution which continues to generate feelings of reverence and allegiance, and serves as a genuine inspiration to many of our citizens.

**T**he road to Constitutional reform in Canada has been a long one, and has seen a number of sharp turns. The failures of First Ministers' conferences to reach consensus on reform have been numerous.

Back in 1971 we came close, but as things worked out there was no ultimate consensus. Things were put on the back burner, and it wasn't until shortly after the mid-1970's that discussions began again.

In September of 1980 — only four months following the Quebec referendum and after a summer of unprecedented meetings and discussions during which much effort was put into trying to get a Constitutional agreement — success again eluded us.

For the third time in a decade, no agreement was reached.

In spite of the deadlock, the federal government, as we all know, decided to introduce a resolution on Constitutional reform in Parliament. This resolution provided for patriation, an amending formula, a Charter of Rights, a reaffirmation of equalization, and a clarification of provincial ownership and jurisdiction over nonrenewable natural resources.

That Bill and the new Constitution introduced by the federal government in the Parliament of Canada was considered clause by clause in public hearings over a three-month period. This process must be recorded as one of the significant milestones passed — because, contrary to what some people seem to believe about the Constitutional package, this was a time when Canadians from all walks of life, as well as their elected people, had an opportunity to have real input and to have their say on what would be in the Constitution.

If we were to look at the Hansards of those meetings, we would find that many suggestions were made and that many changes were made to the Constitutional package by the House of Commons and Senate joint committee.

During this period, only Ontario and New Brunswick supported the federal government on its resolution and Constitutional package. The other eight Provinces were opposed, and in April of 1981 they announced an alternative known as the Accord of the Group of Eight — containing the amending formula known as the Vancouver amending formula, but no Charter of Rights.

**A**nother important event occurred on September 28, 1981, when the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its decision. It declared that the action by the federal government to forward its



Constitutional resolution to the United Kingdom Parliament would be legal, but that traditional Constitutional practice or convention in Canada required that such action be undertaken with the approval of a significant number of Provinces. The words "significant number" were not defined.

The most important aspect of the ruling was that it determined, for the first time, that the unanimous approval of all Provinces was not necessary — something which many Constitutional and other experts in this country had believed was a requirement.

Following the Supreme Court decision, an attitude of concern was also developing in the United Kingdom. Even among Members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords who were sympathetic to the federal resolution, there was a growing feeling that they were being asked to make choices with regard to Constitutional reform which, in their view, more properly should be made in Canada — and that whatever the traditional Constitutional convention as indicated by the Supreme Court of Canada might be, it should be followed.

While this was not the attitude put forward publicly, many were privately concerned that the package, as it stood, might not be passed by the British House of Commons.

Another interesting situation was developing in the summer of 1981. Public opinion polls were showing that a majority of Canadians across the country favoured protection of their basic rights and freedoms in the Constitution. In other words, they favoured some kind of Charter of Rights.

One particular indication of this attitude was contained in a poll published by the Canada West Foundation in the latter part of October 1981. That poll called into question the opposition of a number of provincial governments to an entrenchment of the Charter of Rights. In

other words, the people in many of the Provinces of western Canada were in favour of some form of Charter of Rights, whereas their governments were very strongly opposed to any such Charter in the Canadian Constitution.

At the same time, there was developing in many parts of Canada, including Ontario, a feeling that the Constitutional battles, arguments, discussions and confrontations had to be settled by means of a compromise that would be good for Canada. What was required was a compromise package that could be broadly supported by most governments.

People were saying, "We want you to sit down and talk. We do not want you to come out and tell us you cannot agree."

This growing feeling formed a very important backdrop to the events of the first week of November 1981 — because it was the context in which the Prime Minister of Canada, after talks with the Provinces, decided that a First Ministers' conference would be held.

So it was that, at 10 o'clock on the morning of November 2, 1981, in the Ottawa Conference Centre, such a conference was convened to try to find — yet again — a solution to this long-standing Constitutional problem — a solution that would allow us to bring home a Constitution which would contain those things most of us felt Canadians wanted and expected to have in it.

After three days of formal private meetings — and many informal meetings which took place during these days and nights — the conference again assembled before the television cameras in the main conference hall. This reassembly was on the Thursday, and it was time to report to the Canadian public on the outcome of the private discussions.

I would say, having been there per-

sonally, that very few of the many commentators and newspaper people who were there had given the meeting much chance of success. I think there was a real sense of shock in the room when they learned of the historic agreement that had been reached on November 5, 1981.

**T**o backtrack for a minute, I want to draw the attention of the House to a series of events which I think was crucial to that Accord. I would like to draw attention to what I believe was a really crucial role played by the federal Progressive Conservative caucus in this whole process.

This must be very much underlined, because it was the Progressive Conservative Party's determined fight in the House of Commons which I believe made the Prime Minister re-evaluate his decision to push for the vote on the Constitutional package before the Supreme Court brought in its decision.

Because of the concerted action of the federal Progressive Conservative caucus and the kind of fight they put up in the House, the government of Canada ultimately agreed not to call the final vote on the Constitutional package until the Supreme Court of Canada had reported.

This led to the call for the November First Ministers' conference — which led in turn to the Accord which had nine Provinces and the federal government agreeing on a Constitutional package — a much more desirable situation than we were facing at the time of the fight in the House of Commons when the Progressive Conservative caucus was engaging in its procedural tactics to bring about some other resolution of the problem at that time.

The Accord that was arrived at in November was a true compromise. As part of that process it was necessary, for

instance, for Ontario to accept changes to the federal government's Constitutional proposals — changes which we had previously opposed vigorously. We accepted changes in both the amending formula and the Charter of Rights, for example.

No compromise is perfect. In Canada, we have learned by long experience that we cannot aim for absolute perfection. Our goal has been — and always will be — to compromise when that compromise is truly in the national interest. That is what, I believe, occurred on this event. For the Premier of this Province (Mr. Davis), I think that this agreement was the fulfilment of a real personal dream that went back to that initial First Ministers' conference.

Indeed, it was the realization of a dream on the part of all of us who have been concerned over the last 10 years with some kind of renewal of Canadian federalism.

Ten years and countless meetings later, we, particularly the Premier of this Province, have had that intense satisfaction. I want to underline this point, because I regret that in many of the press stories this has not been emphasized enough.

**I** think the crucial player in all of this was the Premier of Ontario. The role he was able to play was far more important than most people realize.

I do believe that I should share this little story with the Members. I can recall on the Wednesday evening, November 4 — that was the evening before the Accord was signed — sitting around a table in the hotel suite in Ottawa with some of the Ontario people, including the Premier. It was around 10 o'clock. We had brought in some Chinese food from a little restaurant down the street from the hotel, and we were eating out of the



boxes. A telephone call came, and the Premier retired to the bedroom to talk for a while. Someone mentioned that it was the Prime Minister of Canada on the line.

About 20 to 25 minutes later, the Premier returned. He did not tell us who he had talked to, or mention anything about the discussion. But I remember the one thing he said was: "You know, you can mark down 10:40 p.m. If it all turns out okay, it probably happened at 10:40 p.m. on this Wednesday evening."

That was the result of a call between our Premier and the Prime Minister of Canada.

Indeed, all I am trying to illustrate is the fact that one of the crucial players in this whole Accord was the Premier of this Province.

I also pay tribute and credit to all party Members of this House who had, through thick and thin, taken a bipartisan approach to this endeavour. We had all supported the federal government's previous Constitutional proposals. We had all, by and large, stood up for them, although some may have disagreed with parts. There had been a fairly nonpartisan approach to the whole thing.

The point is that all of us who had been in any Constitutional discussions share some satisfaction and pride in what happened that week in November. It was the culmination of much effort. Achieving a consensus was of paramount importance.

When we went into the First Ministers' Conference in November, the general feeling was that it could not be another aborted conference, as many earlier ones had been. As far as achieving something in a renewal of federalism, a new Constitution, patriation of our Constitution, something had to happen.

Success was necessary, at that time, as a means of restoring Canadians' confidence in our political institutions. Too

many people were beginning to feel that our political institutions could never come up with decisions — that we could never get agreement. Some kind of consensus and agreement was necessary to remove a dark cloud that would continue to hang over a number of other issues if deadlock remained the order of the day.

I will not get into details. I do not have the time tonight to deal with my thesis that lack of Constitutional Accord was also contributing to many of our economic problems and was preventing us from coming to grips with some of them.

In a very personal sense, being present at the discussions in that week in November represented one of the proudest events of my political life, of anything I have known. It was a time when I felt we were taking another very important symbolic step in the development of this country. We were adding to a flag and a national anthem, both of which came out of much controversy — particularly the flag. While some may still object to the flag, I think that most people have come to love, respect and revere the flag of Canada and our national anthem which we sing with pride. Now we are adding a truly made-in-Canada Constitution.

**T**his Saturday, April 17, we will be celebrating this major milestone, as the Queen proclaims this Constitution. But really, it is neither a beginning nor an end of our efforts to strengthen Canada — though it is probably more of a beginning than an end.

When all is said and done, we still face, as we did when we began this process a couple of years ago, the possibility of Quebec separating from Canada, Constitution or no Constitution.

As the Toronto Star said recently in a lead editorial that was entitled "Separatism Looms Anew": "If the PQ govern-

ment is re-elected for a third term with more than 50 per cent of the vote, the government will assume it has the right to declare Quebec independent, delegates to the party's biennial congress decided on the weekend. And even if the PQ wins with fewer than half the votes cast, the party will nevertheless claim a mandate to hold a referendum on independence. It's a heads-we-win, tails-you-lose gambit."

That is, I think, ironic, not to say frustrating and disappointing. We all remember the Quebec referendum. One week after the whole country breathed a sigh of relief over the outcome, all governments in Canada started to work in a series of meetings and efforts which would demonstrate to Quebec — once and for all — that all Canadians meant what they said that a "no" vote would not just reaffirm the status quo; we were going to show our fellow citizens from Quebec that we were serious about our commitment to them in the Canadian Confederation.

So we launched into this two-year Constitution-making period I have been talking about. I guess, as one who participated in it, many of us thought that, after we got into it, it would never end, or that we would never come to any kind of meaningful agreement. But as we now know, we did come to an agreement on a new patriated Canadian Constitution.

However, having reached that point, who feels left out? Quebec. The very Province which we were jointly trying to accommodate is isolated to some degree yet again. I think it is important to say it is isolated by the choice of Mr. Lévesque and his Parti Québécois government to be sure, but it is isolated nevertheless.

I guess we would have to say that this has been a very frustrating chain of events. Through the Constitutional exercise we have aroused the parochial and regional feelings of the west and the east on issues ranging from oil and gas to fishing rights.

We have confused and perhaps even disillusioned the average Canadian everywhere, who could have been forgiven for thinking we could have been better off solving things like unemployment, inflation and other problems, rather than worrying about Constitutions. We have left the very target of the whole exercise, the Province of Quebec (or at least its government) feeling isolated now, and out in left field.

So I ask, what now? I would like to put it very straight tonight. Our efforts to keep Quebec and Quebecers as an integral part of Canada must continue. Our new Canadian Constitution, I believe, will give us something fresh to build on, but we cannot afford to throw up our hands in despair and say that Quebec will never be satisfied.

Some people, I know, are quick to say, "Let them go." We cannot afford that. The name of the game is continued compromise and working together.

I believe that, if the day ever comes when the people of Quebec decide they want to separate from Canada, then we can kiss Canada goodbye. The separation of Quebec would be the first step in a slow-moving, yet I believe very real, chain reaction that would fragment forever this northern half of the continent that we call Canada. None of us would likely see this whole chain of events occur in our lifetime, but I think that end result would occur over a number of years.

I am firmly convinced that, just as the Provinces joined Canada one at a time after our country's formation in 1867, we could run a risk of seeing, over the course of time, the step-by-step breakup of the country if one Province like Quebec decided to opt out.

Some will say that is too dramatic. I do not think so. I am more convinced



than ever that all Canadians, and the governments we elect to represent us, must recognize the situation for what it is today.

We cannot afford to throw up our hands in despair and say we can do nothing. Now is the time when we must bear down, as we have done so often before, and do what we can to make sure that our friends in Quebec stay with Canada and that Canada stays a united country.

By this, I do not mean giving in to every demand of René Lévesque and his separatists; far from it. I do mean, however, that we must continue to be conciliatory and accommodating, with the end being to demonstrate as best we can the mutual advantages to all of us — Quebecers, Ontarians and other Canadians — of maintaining a strong Canadian nation.

Many of us have had the good fortune to travel in Europe. We have been through countries like Switzerland, Germany, France and Belgium, and we have been able to witness firsthand the interaction of various language groups.

We have seen the development of the European Community with its multi-lingual bodies like the European Parliament. These are all a vivid reminder of the healthy diversity that is present when different linguistic and cultural groups exist shoulder to shoulder, sometimes — though not always — divided by political boundaries. So too they are a reminder of the potential that exists in such situations for rivalry and even distrust and animosity.

Anyone with any social sensitivity at all has observed these things in travel abroad. Therefore, it is natural now to let our thoughts return home to North America where on so huge a land mass we are blessed with a sense of stability

and common interest that comes from the fact that we have only two international boundaries dividing our political jurisdictions on a land mass much larger than Europe.

Here in Canada, just as in Europe and elsewhere in the world, we have a built-in diversity arising from language and cultural differences. It is a diversity that can and does enrich the lives of all those who are able and willing to experience the interaction in positive ways.

However, it is a diversity that has the potential for animosity and divisiveness, as I have said, and we have had some examples of this. But we have here a diversity that is worth preserving in its own right, and worth preserving in this Province for defensive reasons also — as a very important key to keeping Canada as one, well into the future.

I am sure the Members of this House all know Robert Stanfield. He is a man whom I always felt would have been an outstanding Prime Minister of Canada. A few years ago, in a speech in New Brunswick, he gave a very thoughtful analysis of some of the choices that now lie before English-speaking Canadians.

Among other things, Bob Stanfield said this:

“Accommodations must be reached. They are not likely to be reached if a substantial proportion of anglophones believe that Canada is basically an English-speaking country outside of Quebec — that it would have remained so if politicians had not stirred up the French, and could be restored to such if only politicians would stop catering to the French.”

Here we are, two days before our long-sought-after Constitution is proclaimed, with a feeling among many Canadians that finally we will have a period of calm. But I am standing here in

this House tonight to say that, in many respects, things have not really changed at all. As far as Quebec is concerned, we have to keep doing more of the same; there has to be more give and take, more patience and more willingness to demonstrate an understanding of the concerns and hopes which have been emanating from Quebec since 1867 and earlier.

There is no doubt that the Parti Québécois is still firmly committed to Quebec independence — a fact which, I emphasize, sometimes makes it difficult to keep our thinking straight. But through all the noise which arises from the PQ, let us remember first that there are many French-speaking Quebecers who remain strongly committed to Canada — and certainly we know that they continue to have some very legitimate expectations.

Essentially, what these boil down to is one simple but fundamental request — that is, that English-speaking Canada demonstrate its acceptance of the French fact in Canada, of the fact that more than one out of four Canadian citizens have French as their mother tongue.

We are being asked, very simply and sincerely, to acknowledge first of all that Canada is officially a bilingual country — and the new Constitution does that — and that the francophone minority has special needs to ensure the survival of its language and its culture.

In terms of attitudes, this seems to me to involve two things: a sense of security and a sense of respect. Because they are a minority, francophones in Canada constantly need tangible evidence of our sensitivity and our awareness in this regard.

As the social and cultural homeland of the vast majority of French-speaking Canadians, Quebec, we are also asked to recognize, has its own special responsibility and therefore may have particular requirements that other Provinces do not.

I believe that we have too often found ourselves hung up on phrases such as “special status,” “dualism” or something else. What we have to ensure is that Canadian federalism in the future is flexible and supple enough to accommodate Quebec and the special characteristics of other regions also.

When we stop to think about it, several Provinces — including Manitoba, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, as well as Quebec — already have some degree of special status based on the terms under which they entered Confederation.

Quebeckers, and I mean federalist Quebeckers, clearly have a legitimate case that continues to require our consideration, and personally I see nothing for any of us to be frightened of.

**T**he Canadian dimension includes as part of itself the Quebec dimension. Without it, we would never have come into being as a nation. It remains today as an essential part of our Canadian identity, to ourselves and to the world. An important aspect of this dimension today, as in the past, is language policy.

Listen to what a distinguished Canadian said about this important aspect:

“Now, to those, and I don’t think they are numerous, who keep on talking about what they think would be the gain to Canada of elimination of the second official language, I have only this to say: that they are whittling at the foundation of Confederation because, apart from that section of the British North America Act, there would have been no Confederation and without it today Confederation would not have survived.”

It was in an address to the Empire Club of Canada on April 4, 1946, by the Honourable Donald Fleming, who later became Canada’s Minister of Finance.

These were very profound words —



and many of the things that Mr. Fleming said in that speech 36 years ago still ring very true today.

The Province of Ontario — its government and its citizens — has a special responsibility in all of this. As the most populous Province and as the Province that is, so to speak, at the very core of Confederation, we have to show maturity and leadership. We have to show the way.

I know that many of our citizens have grown weary of hearing this, but our responsibility and challenge in this Province — and I say this very sincerely because I believe it — is to demonstrate continually to the people of Quebec, in a whole variety of ways, that we accept them and understand their feelings and aspirations and that we are able and willing to continue to listen and react to those feelings in tangible ways.

As I said a few minutes ago, it is not a simple thing to achieve — how to get that message through to the people of Quebec, as distinct from getting it through to the Parti Québécois government.

**A**t Queen's Park, we have spent more time than I can remember trying to come up with ways to get the message through. Sometimes we feel that it is futile — that no matter what we do it never seems to be enough or, worse, that nobody seems to really care. But deep down we know that it is the only answer and our only long term hope.

So we keep on going, one step at a time, doing what we can and, surprisingly, seeing some payoffs, not only from Quebec but also right here in our home Province of Ontario as well as down east and across the west.

For ourselves, we must never forget that, with more than 500,000 franco-Ontarians, we have almost as many French-speaking residents in Ontario as

the total populations of Provinces like New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

In truth, we can look back with pride over the past 10 or 15 years in Ontario to see what tremendous strides have been taken in the area of services to our French-speaking residents.

**W**e have made strides which have been in themselves a major benefit, I believe, not only to franco-Ontarians but to all the people of this Province. We have also made strides which have demonstrated to people elsewhere in Canada that Ontario is able and willing to show the kind of Canada-first leadership that is so badly needed in this country.

From next to nothing, we have built a thriving French-language secondary school system that now serves more than 30,000 francophone young people all across this Province. This, of course, is in addition to the 74,000 pupils receiving their instruction in French at the elementary school level.

We have seen a steady increase in the number of English-speaking elementary school children who are last getting a real chance to begin to learn French as a second language at a level that will enable them to grow with the language, and in a way that will be meaningful and lasting.

Since 1979, there has been a guaranteed right for anyone in the Province to a criminal trial in French. As of this month, the civil courts in Metropolitan Toronto and the francophone regions of the Province will be able to operate in both languages. In the last few years we have built a capacity to provide a range of French-language services in virtually all offices of the Ontario government in those areas of the Province where the majority of French-speaking Ontarians reside.

Slowly and steadily, we are guaranteeing and doing those things that will

serve francophones in this Province. There is a tendency in this House and elsewhere to criticize this government for the Constitutional obligations and the comprehensive legal framework of legislation it has *not* accepted. Unfortunately ignored are the real moral obligations which we *have* accepted and the comprehensive programs we have been and are developing.

This government's capacity to fulfil its program commitment has been greatly increased in recent months. What is more, our progress and our organization have attracted the Provinces, I am happy to say, of New Brunswick and Manitoba, which have come here to study our system and what we are doing for the franco-Ontarians — because it is the kind of thing they want to emulate as an example of the way in which they can effectively deliver French-language services.

In addition to the core of people in the office of the co-ordinator working full-time on French-language services, there are now French-language service co-ordinators in the Ministries of Health, Community and Social Services, Tourism and Recreation, Citizenship and Culture, Labour, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Consumer and Commercial Relations and in the Ministry of the Attorney General.

As I said earlier, this government has built on its existing guarantees to provide a criminal trial in French to anyone in the Province, and by extending its bilingual services in the civil courts as of this month. This capacity will now cover areas containing more than 80 per cent of the francophones in Ontario.

The translation of selected Statutes is proceeding quickly. More than 70 of the most important Statutes are now available in French, including the Highway Traffic Act and the Education Act. I am happy to report that the French-language College of Agricultural Technology in

Alfred opened its doors last September and is now providing specialized instruction to more than 50 young franco-Ontarians.

The French-language secondary school in Penetanguishene, l'Ecole secondaire le Caron, is now completed and the official opening will take place on April 22. I can assure franco-Ontarians and this House that the government's policy and budget commitment to the expansion of French-language services is a high-priority one. Our commitment is real. We are determined to ensure that it is based on a solid capacity to deliver. We shall continue to build and expand, steadily and without diversion, the foundation carefully and firmly built primarily over the past 15 years.

Our primary motivation shall continue to be the justice of providing more and better services for Ontario's French-speaking population and for all people of Ontario. I believe it would be an error to proceed as if every action was in response and reaction to the Parti Québécois. Such has never been the case in the past; I suggest to this House that it should not be in the future.

**H**aving said that, all of us must be acutely aware in this present environment that our actions and our words can be (and often are) taken as signs of intent and commitment, particularly throughout the rest of Canada.

Personally, I strongly believe that what we do in Ontario will — and I emphasize and underscore the word “will” — ultimately have a major bearing on the long-term political outcome in Quebec. Yet, as I said earlier, it is sometimes very frustrating to get the message through, no matter what we do.

At a meeting in Montreal a few years ago, even as Premier Lévesque was



reading a Council of Ministers of Education report on French-language education in Canada, I recall that he said he was surprised to learn the kind of job Ontario had done in the area of French-language education, and that most of the francophones who wished French-language education were served in Ontario.

We said that we had told him that and he said, "I know you said that, but I was never really sure." The report proved it to him. That shows how hard it is to get the message across.

I challenge the Members to join us in getting the message through to Quebec instead of always putting through a negative message. The signals that go beaming to Quebec from Ontario will ultimately, I hope, reach the people of Quebec. We are up against those situations where people who *ought* to know the realities of Ontario do *not* know.

Let us forget about some of the negative things and start telling the people of Quebec that we have done a great job in French-language education in Ontario.

What hope is there in reaching the average Quebecers — the men and women who can do their own thinking, who have their own views of Canada and who will continue to support federalism and oppose separatism — if there is any evidence that the rest of Canada does not give a damn? What we have to do is get the message across, first of all through person to person, community to community, business to business contacts.

I do not believe that the message will get through only by government-to-government interaction. Canadians from every walk of life from Ontario and the rest of Canada, visiting Quebec, doing business in the Province, writing to their friends and their relatives, have to get the message across — that we do care

about them, that we do want them to stay in Canada, and that we do serve the franco-Ontarian population in this Province.

The message we must get across to the people of Quebec is that we are concerned, we care and we want them to stay part of Canada. We must tell them that we in Ontario want to welcome them as neighbours in our Province and make them feel at home here in every possible way, and that we do give a darn about keeping Canada united.

Let us not fall into the trap of doing nothing in Ontario, when our conscience tells us that we really should, because we think there is no way of getting the message through to Quebecers.

The challenge of attitudes, understanding and commitment, however, not only involves individual Canadians but also involves their governments. I think we have a right to expect all governments to make our federal system work effectively, to seek consensus and to accept compromise.

I regret that the Premier of Quebec will not be attending any of the ceremonies this weekend. I regret even more deeply that he has asked the Queen's representative in that Province not to attend, and I guess out of respect for the request that was made of him the Queen's representative has decided not to attend the official ceremonies.

The Ontario government will work with the present government of Quebec. We will rebuild the bridges — because they have become a little tattered in the last couple of years — between our two Provinces. In our mind there is no reason why the historical relationship cannot be rebuilt. These relationships were strong until the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 — going back to the ties between men like Mercier and Mowat, Taschereau

and Ferguson, Duplessis and Frost, Johnson and Robarts, and Bourassa and Davis.

Notwithstanding our very deep and truly-felt feelings against the policies of the Parti Québécois government, we must remember that it is a legitimately elected provincial government in Canada and therefore we have to rebuild the bridges with it. We will work with it as a government because we believe that there is no reason why that kind of historic relationship cannot be built. We will participate in it.

What we have to ask is that the Quebec government — as a government that was solidly re-elected last year, not on a separatist policy but on a “We will give you good government” policy — should drop its reticence to take part in only those federal-provincial and inter-provincial meetings in which, as they said, vital economic interests are at stake.

The government of Quebec should act as a strong provincial government within

the Canadian federal system. That is all we ask. I hope that the Quebec government will take part in all federal-provincial and interprovincial meetings, that Ministers will meet together and that Ministries will work together.

Lately, this has not been happening. Indeed, part of the Quebec government's response to the Constitutional Accord was to suggest that a number of Quebec delegations should not attend meetings — and they did not. I call upon them to take part in federal-provincial and inter-governmental meetings as a provincial government.

I must say that I have been heartened by some of the recent statements by the new Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Jacques-Yvan Morin, who seems to have softened the original position that Quebec would attend only meetings that were of vital economic importance. I hope they will take part as they have in the past, as Canadian provincial par-





ticipants in all meetings, because that is necessary. It is necessary if we are to rebuild those bridges.

For our part, the Ontario government will continue to work towards bringing Quebec into the Constitutional consensus at some time, and we are going to continue to demonstrate our commitment to the delivery of French-language services in Ontario.

In closing, while talking about the Constitution and some of the things that occurred as we worked up to the Accord, there still remains the challenge of western Canada.

The fact is that, for the first time, a western separatist Member has been elected to the Alberta Legislature. There are still feelings of alienation in the western provinces. There is still a desire for more say and more input in what happens at the centre, and what happens in the federal government. We are going to have to face these western feelings, and deal with them effectively.

I believe that the new Constitution and a second round of Constitutional discussions will allow us to deal with western concerns in a much better atmosphere and on a much better basis.

In those discussions, very soon, we will come to grips with the concerns of our native people. I hope, also, that we will get on with the problems concerning the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments, and with a

proposal for a reformed Upper House to replace the Senate.

I hope, too, that we will be able to study some form of proportional representation in the House of Commons, something which is going to be necessary to bridge some of the feelings in this country.

**O**n the eve of the proclamation of our new Constitution, I would like to close with the words of a great Canadian — former Governor General Georges P. Vanier, who, in his book *Only to Serve*, wrote these words:

“Each of us can make his own contribution to our country’s unity. May I repeat what I have said so often. We are ten Provinces. I am proud of each one of them — proud of their inhabitants, but not always happy that the boundaries between the Provinces at times look more like barriers than happy meeting places.

“Let us know one another; that will lead to understanding. I want to be known abroad and at home as a Canadian, not only as a citizen of one of the Provinces. I pray to God that we may all go forward hand in hand. We cannot run the risk of this great country falling into pieces.”

That is the challenge that faces all of us, and I am sure we feel it is one worthy of us accepting.









Ontario

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